



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



407068

### Informational open house

EPA is holding an open house Wednesday, April 2, so you can learn more about the latest developments in the Kalamazoo River cleanup.

The open house will be at 6:30 p.m. at the Comfort Inn and Conference Center, 622 Allegan St., Plainwell, Mich. A formal presentation will be at 6:45 p.m.

EPA representatives and other officials will make a formal presentation and be available to discuss site activities with you individually. If you need special accommodations, contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Don de Blasio (see below) by March 28.

### Contact EPA

For more information, or if you have comments about the Kalamazoo river cleanup, contact:

#### Don de Blasio

Community Involvement Coordinator  
EPA Region 5 (P-19J)  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590  
312-886-4360 or 800-621-8431  
Ext. 64360  
weekdays 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
deblasio.don@epa.gov

### For more information

You can read more information about the Kalamazoo River cleanup online at:

[www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject](http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject)

# Plainwell PCB Cleanup Progress, Updates, and Public Meeting

Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

March 2008

Cleanup work on the Kalamazoo River began in early March for the 2008 construction season. This starts the second year of an estimated two-year project to remove 120,000 cubic yards of sediment (mud) containing 4,400 pounds of PCBs from the Kalamazoo River's Plainwell Impoundment. Contractors hired by Millennium Holdings LLC and Georgia-Pacific LLC are doing the work. The two companies are legally responsible for the pollution.

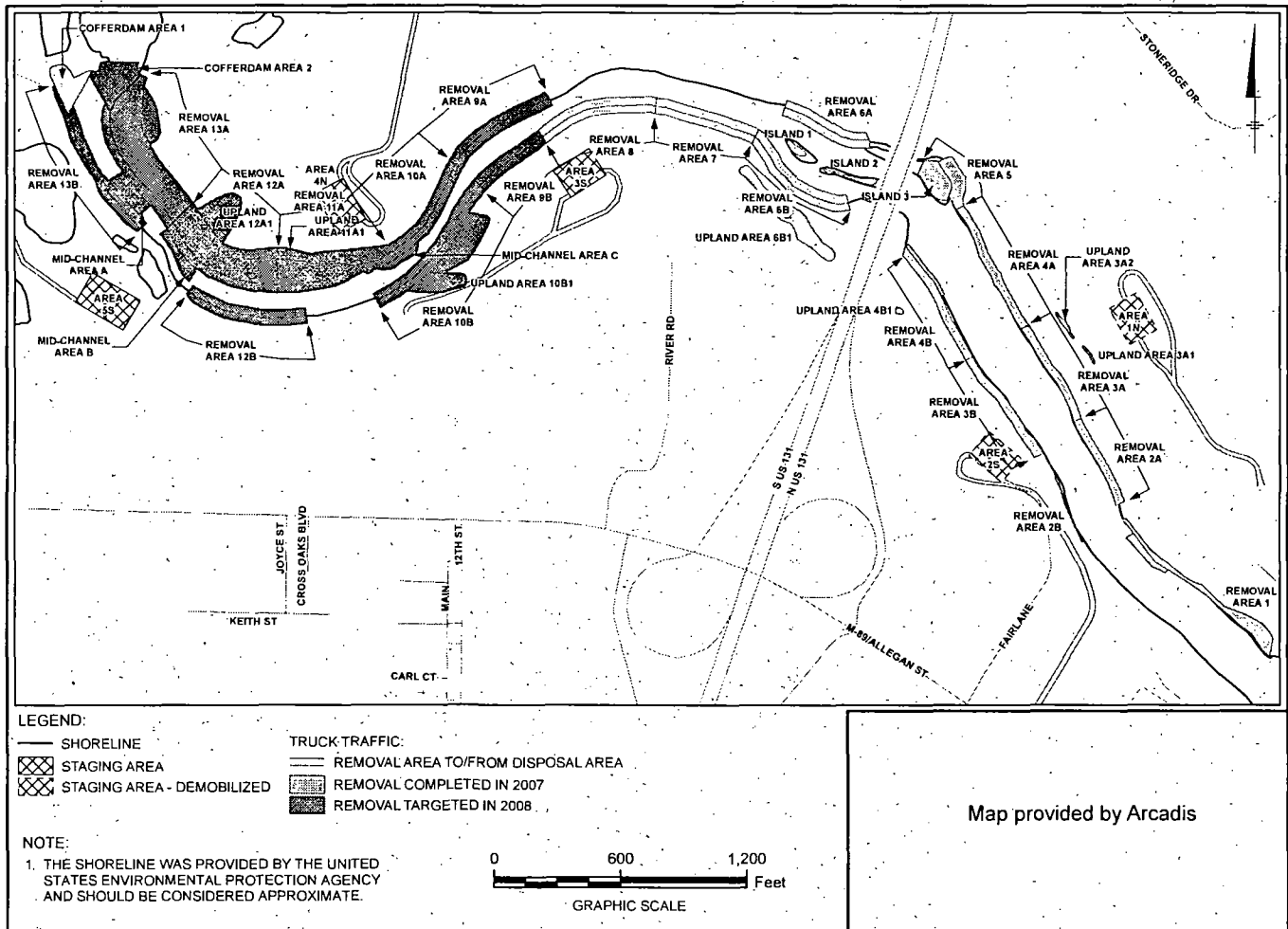
Polychlorinated biphenyls, better known as PCBs, are chemical compounds with common industrial uses. At high concentrations and exposures they can cause illness in humans and wildlife (see box on page 3).

In 2007, more than 37,000 cubic yards or 1,059 truckloads of PCB-contaminated sediment were removed from the river and nearby banks. So far, workers have removed sediment and restored the banks along some 7,800 feet of river bank. This includes removal areas 1, 2, 3A and B, 4A and B, 5, 6A and B, 7 and 8 (see map on page 2). They have completed work in the Phase 1 cofferdam area with construction of the western water diversion structure (Phase 1 cofferdam), which maintains the current flow of the river over the eastern spillway area. This allowed workers to dredge behind the dam, build a water control structure, and remove the portion of the dam in the former powerhouse area.

Phase 2 (2008) work will include excavation within removal areas 9 through 13, removing the Phase 1 cofferdam, and constructing a Phase 2 cofferdam system just upstream of the dam to allow drawdown/dewatering, followed by excavation of sediment from behind the eastern portion (spillway) of the dam. Some 83,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment will be removed this year. The water control structure which was constructed during Phase 1 will remain in place in the western channel as a means of managing the water level in the impoundment to facilitate the dredging operations. After the mid-channel and near-shore sediment removal activities are complete, the water control structure will be removed, allowing the Kalamazoo River to flow freely through the new western channel, past what was once the Plainwell Dam.

Kalamazoo River sediment dug up in the Plainwell Impoundment cleanup this year will be sent off site to commercial landfills for disposal. Approximately 20 to 30 trucks per day will be leaving the project area to the landfills. The Plainwell waste is being divided into sediment containing 50 parts per million (ppm) or more of PCBs and material with lower concentrations. One part PCB per million parts sediment is a tiny amount, similar to one second in 12 days.

Under the federal Toxic Substances and Control Act, EPA regulates the use, storage and disposal of sediment with PCB concentrations exceeding



50 ppm. Sediment with PCBs above this level will continue to be sent to Environmental Quality Co.'s Wayne Disposal Landfill in Belleville, Mich. Sediment with less than this concentration of PCBs, which is considered nonhazardous waste, will continue to be sent to Allied Waste's C and C Landfill near Marshall, Mich., and its Ottawa Farms Landfill near Coopersville, Mich.

EPA Region 5 and state partner Michigan Department of Environmental Quality continue to oversee this year's dredging. The estimated cost of the time-critical removal action is \$30 million and is expected to continue through December 2008. Site information including new photographs is posted at [www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject](http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject).

### Kalamazoo River/Portage Creek supplemental cleanup studies

A February 2007 legal agreement requires additional study of the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek. Planners divided the river into seven areas for the additional investigation. Area 1 consists of the Kalamazoo River between Morrow Dam and Plainwell, and Portage Creek between Cork Street and the Kalamazoo River. Phase 1 of the investigation work was conducted last fall. Phase 2 investigations are being developed and will be conducted this spring.



*Shoreline restored with river rock banks*



*Removing vegetation and contaminated soil*

## Update for the landfills

In addition to the removal action at the Plainwell Impoundment, cleanup developments on other parts of the Kalamazoo River site are occurring.

- MDEQ is finalizing a cleanup investigation at the Allied Paper Landfill. Copies of the study will be given to members of the public and the city of Kalamazoo. EPA met with the city and will be working with them to make sure the study considers all issues deemed important by the city. Shortly after the public meeting, EPA will be engaging with the public on reuse ideas.

- After completing the emergency action to excavate residuals out of the powerhouse channel, regrade and pull back the eastern side of the 12th Street Landfill, Weyerhaeuser is now working on the cleanup design for the landfill. The reshaping will protect the landfill and prevent erosion when the river is rerouted to its original channel—part of the overall design for the Plainwell Impoundment. EPA expects the design phase to continue through 2008.
- Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill will be capped and a monitoring network installed. EPA is working with the responsible parties about designing and implementing a final cleanup plan for the work. The trustees are working to make this a joint agreement.
- A gas collection trench was built along King Highway in late 2007.

## What are PCBs?

PCBs are a group of toxic chemicals that were produced in the United States between 1929 and 1978 for use primarily as industrial coolants, insulators and lubricants. PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications, including carbonless copy paper—which contributed to the Kalamazoo River contamination—and many other applications because they were stable and resisted wear and chemical breakdown.

The same chemical properties that made PCBs useful to industry are now responsible for persistent levels of PCBs remaining in the environment, including the Kalamazoo River. PCBs last in the environment because they adhere readily to organic material in

sediment and soil and tend to build up in the fatty tissue of fish and other animals. PCBs have been demonstrated to cause a variety of adverse health effects in animals. PCBs cause cancer and may affect the immune, reproductive, nervous and endocrine systems. Studies suggest PCBs have similar effects on people.

The different health effects of PCBs may be interrelated, as alterations in one system may have significant implications for other systems of the body. The potential adverse environmental and health effects of PCBs were not well understood until 1977, when the government banned most uses of PCBs.

## On the Web:

[www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject](http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject)

**ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO RIVER SUPERFUND SITE:  
Plainwell PCB Cleanup Progress and Updates**

*This fact sheet is printed on paper made of recycled fibers.*

Region 5  
Superfund Division (P-19J)  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604

United States  
Environmental Protection  
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**FIRST CLASS**

**Plainwell PCB Cleanup  
Progress and Updates**

Informational open house  
Wednesday, April 2  
(details inside)